

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CPR-01

NSC-05 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 INR-07 SAB-01 /042 R

DRAFTED BY ARA:RBBENTLEY:MBB

APPROVED BY ARA:WDROGERS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 107537

E.O. 11652:GDS

, # "SPN, CO, VE,

AGS: PBOR, PFOR, CS, PN, CO, VE,

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTERS TO PRESIDENTS ODUBER, LOPEZ
AND PEREZ

REF: SAN JOSE 1223

1. THE FOLLOWING IS LETTER SIGNED TODAY BY PRESIDENT FORD
TO PRESIDENTS ODUBER, LOPEZ AND PEREZ. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR PRESIDENT :

THANK YOU FOR THE THOUGHTFUL LETTER OF MARCH 24 SIGNED
BY PRESIDENT ODUBER OF COSTA RICA, PRESIDENT LOPEZ OF
COLOMBIA AND YOURSELF AND DELIVERED BY FOREIGN MINISTER
LIEVANO ON APRIL 8.

I AM DEEPLY COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING THE TRADITIONAL
TIES OF FRIENDSHIP AND SHARED ASPIRATIONS WHICH HAVE
CHARACTERIZED THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. IT IS
IN THIS SPIRIT THAT I EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION AND ESTEEM
FOR YOUR VIEWS ON THIS MOST IMPORTANT MATTER.

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I UNDERSTAND YOUR VIEW THAT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA TRANSCENDS THE CONFINES OF BILATERAL RELATIONS AND IS OF

INTEREST NOT ONLY TO PANAMA'S NEIGHBORS BUT TO ALL NATIONS OF THE HEMISPHERE.

THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A NEW TREATY WILL CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE STRUCTURE OF WORLD PEACE, A GOAL TO WHICH I HAVE SOLEMNLY DEDICATED MYSELF.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS ENTERED THIS NEGOTIATION IN A SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION AND IN RECOGNITION OF THE NECESSITY FOR AN EFFECTIVE COOPERATIVE WORLD ORDER. OUR RELATIONS WITH PANAMA AS WITH THE OTHER NATIONS OF THIS HEMISPHERE ARE BASED ON MY CONVICTION THAT FREE PEOPLES UNITED BY SIMILAR ASPIRATIONS AND VALUES CAN ACHIEVE GREAT GOALS ON THE BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE MODERNIZED, AND I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE SINCE NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN IN NOVEMBER 1973. MY ADMINISTRATION PLACES GREAT HOPE ON ARRIVING AT A TREATY ALONG THE LINES PROJECTED BY THE JOINT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES SIGNED BY PANAMA ON FEBRUARY 7, 1974.

THE UNITED STATES HAS A CONTINUING ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTEREST IN THE CANAL. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IT RECOGNIZES THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF THE CANAL TO PANAMA AND ITS DESIRE TO EXERCISE SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS ENTIRE TERRITORY. I HAVE INSTRUCTED OUR NEGOTIATORS TO WORK WITH DILIGENCE AND IMAGINATION TO PRODUCE A TREATY WHICH RECOGNIZES THESE OBJECTIVES.

I APPRECIATE THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN YOUR LETTER ON THE SPECIFIC ISSUES OF DURATION OF THE TREATY AND THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES IN PANAMA. THEY WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE FORMULATION OF OUR POLICY ON THIS MATTER.

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IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT A CANAL AGREEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. I ASSURE YOU OF MY CONTINUING EFFORTS TO THIS END.

ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST ESTEEM,

MOST SINCERELY, END TEXT.

2. WE PLAN TO PUBLISH LETTERS OF THREE PRESIDENTS
(REPTTEL) AND PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER UNLESS HOST GOVERN-
MENT HAS OBJECTION. PLEASE ADVISE. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE107537
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RBBENTLEY:MBB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750162-0504
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750569/aaaackqo.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SAN JOSE 1223
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL LETTERS TO PRESIDENTS ODUBER, LOPEZ AND PEREZ
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, VE, CS, PN, CO, US, (FORD, GERALD R), (LOPEZ MICHELSEN, ALFONSO), (LOPEZ, CARLOS ANDRES), (ODUBER QUIROS, DANIEL)
To: BOGOTA MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006